

have such an exceptional educator in my district. We offer heartfelt congratulations to Vicky for a job well done as we wish Vicky and her family a joyous celebration of this milestone as she begins a new chapter in her life.

RECOGNIZING THE 2008
EXPLORAVISION AWARD WINNERS

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2008

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate Timothy Zako, Enzo Fantin-Yusta, and Ahsan Mahmood for their outstanding performance in the 2008 ExploraVision Award. These seventh graders from West Hills Middle School in West Bloomfield, Michigan, along with their coaches Paul Sanchez and Amy Burke embody the innovative spirit of America. Together this team succeeded in capturing second place in this prestigious regional competition.

The ExploraVision Awards, which are sponsored by Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association, are awarded to students of all ages for combining their imaginations with the tools of science to create and explore a vision of tomorrow's technology. Students of different interest, ability, and skill levels develop new technologies utilizing their creative thinking and problem solving skills.

The students from West Hills Middle School sought out to find a new method for treating lazy eye and strabismus, a condition where ones' eyes are misaligned. These conditions, which affect roughly four percent of children in America, are often treated with eye-patches or in some instances surgery. These treatments limit the activities that children can participate in, can lower the child's self esteem, and in the most severe cases require extremely invasive surgery.

Utilizing existing technologies, the students were able to develop a prototype that could be worn like eyeglasses, and could be turned on and off as needed so that the child could use both eyes together and see in three dimensions at least some of the time. The Strabismus Glasses, as they named them, would help a child's self-esteem by allowing them to treat their condition without having to use an eye-patch.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate these students for their amazing and creative work. I am proud of the initiative these young people have shown. Theirs is a shining example of what we are all capable of achieving with just a little imagination and some hard work.

ONE WORLD NOW

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2008

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I submit the following:

WHAT I CAN DO

(By Philmon Haile)

First of all I would like to thank Kirstin Hayden and all of the One World Now folks

for inviting me to speak here today; and for bringing me home from our nation's capitol.

When I was a younger man I dreamt I could change the world. However, as I grew older and wiser I realized that the world was too big and immovable and would not change. Consequently, I decided to take on a narrower target and change my country. However, as I grew older and wiser, I realized my country was too big, too fixed in its way of doing things, immovable and would not change. I therefore decided to address my city and community. However, once again as I grew older and wiser I realized that my city and community were too large and immovable and would not change. So, I decided that one last time I would try and change those nearest to me: my friends and family. But, as I had learned so many times before, those nearest to me—my friends and family—would not change. The problems I saw in the world included violence, intolerance, and racism. Broken and divided schools and cities, racial slurs, being spoken and glorified through the media. Growing up I heard phrases like “you're not black enough”, to any African-American who stepped outside the circle and made white friends and listened to any other music other than Rap, or played any other sports besides basketball. I think “you're not black enough” is just another way to say you don't have sufficient hate for others. If being black means to hate, then I would rather be green. Of course this isn't what it means to be black. I've heard of genocide and gang violence. When I was born, my home country Eritrea had just finished a thirty-year war for independence from Ethiopia. A war is still going on today between the two countries, with a tense border conflict plaguing the people. I am close to this war because both parents were involved in it, a facet of my personal and family history. These problems are so real to me I pray every night for the safety of grandparents, who—as I speak—continue to live in a war torn country run by a dictator. Because these issues are so real, I spend a lot of time thinking about why this happens.

I found the problem. People hurt each other because they had no idea what it felt to be the other party. I knew the answer too, and I thought the best way to end all of this was through education; uniting people through education; giving them a chance to learn about each other so they can coexist peacefully.

Now, as I stand here, old and tired at the ripe old age of 17, I finally get it. Perhaps if I abolished my own stereotypes, I could have impacted my friends and family. Their change in turn may have influenced more people and could have changed my city and community and—who knows—maybe even my country and the world: a ripple effect like a pebble in the pond.

Let's be honest with ourselves—anyone who grows in this world has certain established mind sets and we all need to tear them down before we can progress and accept people for who they are.

In order to be a successful leader, one must be willing to give up certain ideas, decisions and a degree of popularity in order to negotiate, mediate and decide what is in the best interest of the whole. The persona you create around you is how people perceive you. Without a positive attitude I've learned the ability to lead others confidently and work together is greatly diminished. Qualities of tolerance, openness, and optimism are what One World Now represents and instills in all their students, qualities that will reside and resonate forever.

When I came to Garfield High School, I never thought that I could take Chinese especially for free, or much less use those skills and afford to study abroad. You know,

my brother studied abroad just as I hope to. I know my family couldn't afford to send both my brother and me abroad. I know this is the case for many other people traveling on a One World Now! Scholarship. After my older brother, Robel discovered One World Now! I wanted to do it. We have a “typical” older-younger brother relationship, so he tells me that only upper classmen can be involved, so being the gullible freshman I was, I believed him, only to learn my sophomore year that freshmen were enrolled in One World Now! classes. It is amazing what One World Now! is doing, offering high school students classes in the two most critical world languages: Arabic and Chinese. Believe me, in my position as a Congressional Page, I hear about the Middle East and China in debates almost every day. If our leaders knew Chinese and Arabic and understood their cultures, this world would be a much different place. If they could have been involved in One World Now, they would have a better understanding. One World Now is more than just Chinese and Arabic classes and the free food at Friday leadership meetings: it is a melting pot—a place where I was exposed to many different cultures, races, and religions; a place where I made many good friends. Every week that I went to One World Now classes, I grew a little bit. I sometimes got tired of them saying “get out of your comfort zone” and “be passionate”, but that was what really happened, at every meeting I felt I was stripped of all the walls I put up and just showed the bare and true Philmon. That's how you really gain social skills and grow as a person. There are so many different types of people you don't know how to act, so just act like yourself. That's how you really build character. The change that has occurred in me is something I can't describe, something deep within has changed. I am now able to communicate my ideas better, more powerfully. The only thing I can't communicate is the change that has occurred because it so deep within me, but resonates and I can always feel it. This is all because of One World Now and the opportunities offered me from their influence. Through One World Now, I've really walked a thousand miles. I am a different person than when I was a sophomore.

When I was invited to be a U.S. House of Representatives Page and I accepted, I felt both sad and happy. The sadness came when I realized I would not be able to take One World Now classes every other day. Before I accepted, I went to the One World Now office and asked how this would affect my membership at One World Now. They told me that I will always be a part of the One World Now family, and that I could even apply to go to China with them this summer. I came to DC sad that I wouldn't be able to take Chinese in a formal Chinese class setting provided by One World Now, but I was determined I would not give up. I found the Chinese Cultural Center, and learned I could take Chinese there. So I went over there and they asked questions like “how long have you been taking Chinese?” and I told them one year, so they gave their second year test because they only offered up to Chinese level the level I should have been at. I took the test and they told me that I was too advanced to take their classes, so Teacher Sun (find her in the audience) if you're in the room, you taught me well. So I decided to become a volunteer and asked if they could only speak to me in Chinese. While in DC I still called my old Chinese classmates and teacher, to make sure I was caught up to where I needed to be. I was now ready to reap the benefits of the Congressional Page program.

In this program I am able watch the debates of our country's architects. I think it